

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

November 29, 2005

The Honorable,
The Board of Commissioners of Cook County

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Suffredin, Vice Chairman Silvestri, Commissioners Claypool, Daley, Gorman, Peraica and Sims (7)

Absent: Commissioners Collins and Murphy (2)

Also Present: Timothy Casey, Coordinator of Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the President;
Steve Morrill, Lobbyist for Cook County Board of Commissioners

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Your Committee on Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County met pursuant to notice on Tuesday, November 29, 2005 at the hour of 1:00 P.M. in the Board Room, Room 569, County Building, 118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Chairman Suffredin stated that the purpose of this meeting is to provide the Cook County lobbyists with an opportunity to provide a recap of the past year, and to share any issues that they anticipate will arise during the coming year.

Chairman Suffredin requested that the following two booklets be entered into the record: "County Lobbyists' Reports on the 2005 Regular and Veto Session in the Illinois General Assembly" and "End-of-Session Report to the Cook County Board and President on the 94th General Assembly 2005 Regular Session."

Chairman Suffredin introduced Timothy Casey, Coordinator of Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of the President, to present an overview of this year's Illinois House and Senate legislative session.

At Chairman Suffredin's request, Mr. Casey highlighted the following budget funds which the State allocated to the County: \$7.5 for Medicaid, \$1 million to the Boot Camp, various Public Health grants, and numerous grants under the Criminal Justice Information Authority for Public Safety programs.

Chairman Suffredin noted that, beginning on page 21 of the "End of Session Report To the County Board and President on the 94th General Assembly 2005 Regular Session," there is a summary of all of the line-item grants.

Mr. Casey noted the passage of Senate Bill 1509 regarding the obligation of the State to reimburse the County for half of the cost to house parole violators. (See p. 14 of "End of Session Report To the County Board and President on the 94th General Assembly 2005 Regular Session.") He further noted that numerous counties were organized to submit a memo requesting to override the amendatory veto of Senate Bill 1509, and that this method could prove useful again on other issues.

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Steve Morrill, Lobbyist for Cook County Board of Commissioners, stated that no bills that the County opposed passed. He next provided an overview of the bills that the County supported that did pass. These include the following: HB 115, HB 2462, HB 3066, SB 75, SB 1443, SB 1444, SB 1509, SB 2053. (These Bills are detailed in the attached, "End of Session Report To the County Board and President on the 94th General Assembly 2005 Regular Session.")

Chairman Suffredin noted that these Bills become effective on January 1, 2006, and that the process of enacting them has begun.

Commissioner Daley stated that, from conversations he has had with Thomas Glaser, Chief Financial Officer, his understanding is that the \$8 million associated with SB 1444 will be the result of a shifting of funds.

Chairman Suffredin replied that the \$8 million will be new revenue that will be generated by the fee increase from \$5 to \$15. He further stated that he would confirm this with Mr. Glaser.

Chairman Suffredin inquired as to the existence of an election package, requested by the Clerk, that is awaiting passage for the first week of January and that addresses several clean-up issues relating to early voting.

Mr. Morrill confirmed the existence of this package, and noted that it is Senate Bill 1445.

Mr. Morrill next presented an overview of the following Bills that the Board supported but that did not pass: HB 339, HB 2416, SB 51, SB 204, SB 530, SB 1445, SB 1622, SB 1683, SB 1696 and SB 1697. (These Bills are detailed in the attached, "End of Session Report To the County Board and President on the 94th General Assembly 2005 Regular Session.")

Chairman Suffredin stated that the County might no longer want to pursue the passage of SB 51 – which relates to the Cook County TB Sanitarium District - because Dr. Martin is now on the Board and, also, because a cooperative arrangement with the Cook County Health Department has recently been established.

Commissioner Silvestri inquired whether Senator Harmon would have any desire to reintroduce this Bill if the County no longer desired to pursue it.

Mr. Morrill replied in the negative.

In response to Commissioner Silvestri's request for clarification of SB 1445, Chairman Suffredin stated that this Bill now addresses only absentee voting and early voting.

Mr. Morrill clarified that while SB 1622 did not pass, the concept of the bill passed on another bill.

Mr. Morrill noted that no bills passed to which the Board opposed.

Mr. Morrill summarized the bills that the Board opposed and which did not pass both Houses: HB 644, SB 761 and SB 1727. (These Bills are detailed in the attached, "End of Session Report To the County Board and President on the 94th General Assembly 2005 Regular Session.")

Commissioner Silvestri inquired whether the Board should expect SB 1727 to return.

Mr. Morrill replied in the affirmative.

Commissioner Silvestri noted that it is his understanding that the leadership in the House is not supportive of this Bill.

Mr. Morrill agreed.

Mr. Morrill commented on two additional issues: 1) Regarding the Illinois First Grant, just before the Veto Session the Governor released a \$12 million Forest Preserve District Grant that had been awarded during the George Ryan administration, and 2) the Assessor plans to run legislation next Spring to make permanent the "7% solution."

Commissioner Peraica inquired as to when the grant money is due to be released.

Mr. Morrill replied that he did not know the answer to this.

Chairman Suffredin replied that the General Superintendent of the Forest Preserve District, Steven M. Bylina, Jr., notified the Board that the entire \$12 million is currently in the Forest Preserve District Treasury.

Commissioner Peraica voiced concern that it is his understanding that the Treasury possesses only partial payment of this grant.

Mr. Morrill stated that he would obtain this information and report back to the Board.

Chairman Suffredin stated that the Committee will be holding a hearing at which the Assessor will present his case. The Committee will draft a resolution.

Chairman Suffredin delivered remarks on three additional issues:

The Ethics Reform Bill passed the House and is currently in the Senate. This Bill has implications for members of both the County Board and the Pension Board.

The Republican leader, Representative Cross, has put forth a bill which seeks to transfer to the Chief Judge the power over the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. The Chief Judge currently has power over all other fifteen Illinois juvenile detention centers. Chairman Suffredin stated that he expects a number of bills to be put forth on this issue, and that the Committee should focus on forming a consensus regarding legislation recommendations.

Chairman Suffredin stated that he expects the State to pass a capital program which will involve state matching funds of the federal funds being supplied as part of the Federal Transportation Bill. He asked Mr. Casey to determine whether there are any County highway projects that would qualify.

Mr. Casey stated that he would speak with Wally Kos, P.E., Superintendent of Highways, more extensively to determine what funding is available.

Commissioner Peraica inquired as to the duration of the projects.

Commissioner Suffredin replied: The projects will most likely take longer than one year but not as long as five years. Metra, Pace and the CTA are also pursuing grants.

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Commissioner Silvestri moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Daley. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Legislation and
Intergovernmental Relations

Larry Suffredin, Chairman

Attest:

Michelle Harris, Secretary